

EXPEDITED Plan Review

Newsletter

Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

www.co.fairfax.va.us/dpwes

State Amends 1996 USBC

The Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development adopted amendments to the 1996 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) which will become effective September 15, 2000. Section 103.2 of the amended 1996 VUSBC allows projects for which working drawings have been substantially completed prior to September 15, 2000, to be subject to the previous edition of the VUSBC provided that the permit application is submitted to the Office of Building Code Services (OBCS) by September 15, 2001.

Highlights of the code amendments include the following:

- **Radon:** New provisions were added which allow the state's localities, through action by the local governing body, to decide whether to enforce the radon provisions of 1995 CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code, as listed in Appendix F. No action has been taken as yet by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.
- **Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS):** Special inspections will be required for applications of barrier-type EIFS regardless of the square footage of application. Exempt from this requirement are EIFS applied to concrete or masonry.
- **Electrical Service Equipment:** Specific requirements are outlined as to when electrical service equipment may be energized in single family dwellings.
- **Fireresistance assembly markings:** All concealed, vertical firerated assemblies must be designated as such with one inch lettering above the ceiling level at specified intervals.
- **Accessibility:** Buildings less than three floors and 3000 square feet *per floor* are not required to have an accessible route from the level containing the accessible entrance to the floors above or below (i.e., elevators).
- **Separate Restroom Facilities in Mercantile Occupancies:** Separate restroom facilities for each sex are not required for mercantile spaces with 5,000 square feet or less.
- **Customer Restroom Facilities in Assembly and Mercantile Occupancies:** Occupancies of assembly and mercantile, which do not serve food and have an occupant load less than 150, are not required to provide customer restroom facilities.
- **Elevators:** Any building four stories or more will be required to have one elevator with a car that can accommodate a stretcher for emergency services.
- **Existing Structures:** Numerous provisions have been added which provide new requirements for existing structures with regard to replacement glass, smoke detectors, fire suppression systems, and handicapped parking spaces.
- **Change of Occupancy:** When altering existing spaces involves a change of occupancy, upgrading that space to comply with all of the accessibility provisions of the 1996 BOCA National Building Code and 1992 CABO/ANSI A117.1 will no longer be required. Rather, accessibility upgrades which exceed 20% of the cost of the alterations will not be mandatory.

When available, further information and training opportunities for the new edition of the 1996 VUSBC will be posted on the Announcements page of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services website (www.co.fairfax.va.us/dpwes). The next annual training session, scheduled for October 4, 2000 will cover the new updates; however, unless otherwise notified, this training session is not mandatory. For more information contact Brian Foley at 703-324-1645 or brian.foley@co.fairfax.va.us.

BOCA Records

Recent quality assurance reviews of peer reviewed plans has found that many peer reviewers are not fully completing the BOCA Plan Review Record. In some cases the BOCA record was not even submitted. There are numerous ways in which those records assist the peer reviewer, plan reviewer, and client.

When filling-in the plan review record, it is a requirement of the *Expedited Building Plan Review Program* that the entire record be completed. There shall be no lines left unchecked. If a line is not applicable, mark it "NA." If a whole page is not applicable, draw a cross through it and mark it "NA."

Only in this way can the County, during its cursory review, be assured that the peer reviewer has indeed reviewed all applicable code sections. This assists the peer reviewer as well by providing a "checklist" of the provisions pertinent to the discipline being reviewed.

The first few pages of each BOCA record are lined to allow for the reviewer to include comments. While this is not a requirement of the program, it is strongly encouraged that all review comments be included on or with the plan review record. By including these comments, the County reviewers have a better understanding of the plan's original state and the peer reviewer's approach to the plan review.

Missing plan review records have also been a problem. In some cases, the records have fallen out of the plans or the permit runner has failed to include them in the official submittal. Physically attaching the records to the County set is recommended.

Starting September 1, 2000, all peer reviewed plans submitted to the Building Plan Review Division will not be accepted for review if the plan review records are not included or are not fully completed.

Recommendation Statements

During the recent quality assurance review conducted by the County, it was also found that most Recommendation Statements were also not fully completed. Missing in most cases was either the tax map number, type of construction, use group(s), or all of the above.

Fairfax County is divided up into a grid system where each square within that grid is assigned a number called the tax map number. Finding the tax map number can be easy. An atlas of Fairfax County which shows streets and their respective tax map grids can be purchased at the Maps and Publications Office in the Government Center, **703-324-2974**. Tax map numbers may also be obtained online. Go to the website below, input the address, click on the "Search" button, and the tax map number will be provided.

www.co.fairfax.va.us/dta/re/propadd.asp

Missing use groups and type of construction are mostly found on mechanical, electrical, or plumbing statements. If the use group(s) and type of construction is unknown, please consult the peer reviewer responsible for the building review. However, in no case should the MEP reviewers not know this vital information!

Starting September 1, 2000, all peer reviewed plans submitted to the Building Plan Review Division will not be accepted for review if the Recommendation Statements are not fully completed.

Online Changes

The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services has established an interactive feature to the department's website. If the permit or plan number ("Q" number) of the drawings submitted to the County for review is known, the status of the reviews may be retrieved 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition to the plan status, a permit and inspection status may also be obtained. Beginning in September, it will be possible to schedule and cancel inspections online. The new service is called "ISISnet"; ISIS stands for "Inspection Services Information System." The URL for the new service is:

www.co.fairfax.va.us/isisnet

Turnaround Times

The average turnaround times for expedited plans by the Building Plan Review Division between January 1, 2000 and July 1, 2000 are as follows:

New Construction

Average days* for 1st submission19
Average days* for corrections.....7
Average days* for revisions6

Tenant Layouts

Average days* for 1st submission6
Average days* for corrections.....2
Average days* for revisions3
* working days

For more detailed information, see the attached sheet.

Code Interpretation

The following interpretation applies to the 1999 BOCA National Building Code; however, it may help provide insight to the same requirement in the 1996 edition.

Formal Code Interpretation - 1/714/00
BOCA National Building Code/1999
Sections 709.6, 711.6 and 714.1

Question: A building or structure of Type 5 construction contains fire resistance rated fire separation wall assemblies and/or fire partitions. Although these walls are continued to the underside of the floor or roof slab or deck above, they are penetrated by the structural wood members of the floor/ceiling and roof/ceiling assemblies. Do Sections 709.6, 711.6 and 714.1 of the BOCA National Building Code/1999 permit these combustible penetrations through the rated wall assemblies?

Answer: Yes.

Comment: The purpose of the fire separation wall assemblies and fire partitions is to minimize the potential of a fire spreading within the building from one area to another. All penetrations through the fire resistance rated walls must be properly protected to maintain the walls' integrity. Sections 709.6 and 711.6 further identify that penetrations through a fire separation wall assembly or fire partition must meet the limitations and requirements of Section 714.1. The annular space between the penetrating roof and floor members and the fire resistance rated wall assemblies must be protected as noted in Sections 714.1.4 and 714.1.4.1.

Formal Code Interpretation - 2/710/00
BOCA National Building Code/1999

Question: A vertical shaft does not extend to the bottom of a building, but is enclosed at its lowest level with the required fire separation assembly. An air duct within the shaft penetrates that fire separation assembly. Does Section 710.5 of the BOCA National Building Code/1999 permit a horizontal fire damper to be installed at the bottom enclosure to protect that shaft penetration? Similarly, a vertical shaft does not extend to the underside of the roof deck of a building, but is enclosed at its top with the required fire separation assembly. Does Section 710.4 of the BOCA National Building Code/1999 permit a horizontal fire damper to be installed at the top enclosure to protect that shaft penetration?

Answer: No.

Comment: The use of fire dampers in lieu of vertical shafts is regulated by Sections 714.2.5 and 714.3.1.1. The air ducts within the shaft would need to penetrate the walls of the vertical shaft in order for Section 714.1.5 to allow the use of fire dampers to protect those penetrations. Where a vertical shaft is not extended to the bottom of the building, the shaft must be enclosed in accordance with Section 710.5 or terminate in a room related to the shaft's function and having the same enclosure rating as the shaft. Further, the fire resistance rated room separation is not required when one of the two exceptions apply. Simply providing fire dampers at the bottom enclosure of the fire resistance rated shaft to protect air duct penetrations is not consistent with the requirements of Section 710.5. A fire damper at the lowest floor level is not considered equivalent to a fire resistance rated room.

Where the top of a vertical shaft does not terminate at the roof deck of the building, Section 710.4 requires the top of the shaft to be enclosed with a fire separation assembly which has a fire resistance rating the same as the shaft enclosure. Unlike the options that are permitted for the bottom of the shaft, the fire separation assembly at the top of the shaft is the only option permitted for top enclosure. Any air duct penetrations of that top enclosure cannot be simply protected with horizontal fire dampers to prevent the vertical spread of a fire condition. The air ducts within the shaft would need to penetrate the walls of the vertical shaft in order for Section 714.1.5 to allow the use of fire dampers to protect those penetrations.